

**ABSTRACT**

A communication system constructed according to the present invention provides a method and apparatus for causing a message to be played to a calling party to indicate that the called party will be taking the call shortly. In each embodiment, a called party depresses a select key or button in a specified manner to indicate that the message should be played to the calling party. The method may be performed by anyone of an SS7 or other IN network, a wireless network, a mobile station or a wireline phone. According to the type of phone, differing embodiments of the methods performed by the communication network may be realized. In the case of a mobile station, the entire method may be performed by it in one embodiment of the invention. Alternatively, if the phone is a wireline phone, the method may be performed solely by the wireline telephone network. In one embodiment of the present invention, the call is connected as normal but the message is played to advise the calling party that the called party will be taking the call shortly. In other embodiments, either the call is not completed until the called party indicates a readiness to take the call, or alternatively, the call is connected but placed on hold or simulated hold by muting one or more of the phone microphone and speaker until the called party indicates a readiness to take the call.